

June 14, 2002

Dear County and District Superintendents:

Districts throughout our state are implementing curriculum standards and processes to improve assessment and evaluation. It is an awesome task, and one that requires the judicious use of resources. At the high school level, schools have found that class size reduction is a strategy to support student achievement.

This letter is written to encourage you to complete the enclosed application to implement high school class size reduction.

The Morgan-Hart Class Size Reduction Act of 1989 (Education Code Section 52080-52090) authorizes funds to reduce class size in two courses in Grade 9. The California Budget Act of 2001 increased the funding level to \$177 per pupil. The Governor's proposed budget for 2002 again includes funding for this program. While funding for the 2002-2003 school year is still dependent on the State Budget Act, we are providing you with an advance application. We are doing so to coordinate our efforts with your school and district planning process, and to encourage districts, which have not participated in the past to consider high school class size reduction for the 2002-2003 school year.

Several significant areas of the Morgan-Hart Class Size Reduction Act are worth noting.

One or Two Grade 9 Courses

One or two Grade 9 courses are designated by the school district for each participating school and certified as meeting the graduation requirements in English, Mathematics, Science, or Social Studies. One of the designated courses shall be English. It is understood that there may be a few pupils from grades other than Grade 9 enrolled in the designated Grade 9 course, but the majority of participants must be identified as Grade 9 students. These non-Grade 9 pupils will qualify as part of the class average and enrollment counts for the Grade 9 course or courses. Full funding for the district cannot exceed the current Grade 9 enrollment [based on California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS)] for implementing English or two (2) times the current Grade 9 enrollment for implementing Grade 9 English and one additional course selected from Grade 9 Mathematics, Science, or Social Studies.

Participating Classes at Participating Schools

The school district application is not required to include all Grade 9 students in the class size reduction program. The current legislation allows participating schools to identify the number of Grade 9 classes implementing the program to reduce class size in two courses in Grade 9. This means some sections of Grade 9 English and some sections of the second Grade 9 course designated for class size reduction may not be participating in the class size reduction program. Funding will only apply to those classes identified on the application and certification documents.

“Grandfathering in” Prior Class Size Reduction in Grades 10-12

School districts, which included grades 10, 11, or 12 for the class size reduction program for the 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-2000, 2000-2001, and 2001-2002 school years, will be able to continue those other classes unless the district chooses to eliminate that program. The “grandfathered in” courses in grades 10-12, inclusive, are assumed to be in place for the entire 2002-2003 school year, unless eliminated. Once a grade 10, 11, or 12 class size reduction program is eliminated, it cannot be reinstated. Total funding shall not exceed the amount received by the school district for the program for grades 10-12, inclusive, in the 1997-98 school year. In addition, school districts can also apply for the Grade 9 class size reduction program in one or two courses under the current legislation.

Class Size Certification

Certification of the average class size for classes participating in the Grade 9 class size reduction program will be computed for each participating school within the district. Average class size for the school year at each participating school can be no more than 20:1 per certificated teacher and no more than 22 pupils enrolled in any participating class. Certifications for purposes of determining the final allocation for each district will occur at the end of the school year on the Report of Enrollment Form, J-9 MH-A.

Applications Process

The application packet is to be used by the California Department of Education to determine the estimated number of school districts and the number of students for planning purposes only and is necessary to start the flow of funds. Final adjustments to the 2002-2003 provisional funding will be made based on actual enrollment data submitted at the end of the fiscal year. The application packet for the 2002-2003 Morgan-Hart Class Size Reduction Program must be postmarked by July 30, 2002. The application is included in this mailing and is also available on the Internet through the Class Size Reduction Web page (www.cde.ca.gov/hart).

Implementation for 2002-2003

A district wishing to add a Grade 9 class size reduction program or to expand the Grade 9 class size reduction program currently in place will be able to accomplish this in several ways. The expansion to two courses in Grade 9 can be implemented for the entire 2002-2003 school year or one or both courses in Grade 9 can be added at any point during the 2002-2003 school year. Grade 9 English must be implemented in order for the district to receive an apportionment for class size reduction in Grade 9. If English is the designated Grade 9 course, then a second Grade 9 course in Mathematics, Science, or Social Studies required for graduation can be added at any time during the 2002-2003 school year.

Apportionment Amount

A maximum apportionment of \$177 per certified pupil, per course, was available to be distributed to school districts for the 2001-2002 school year. The apportionment amount for the 2002-2003 school year will be dependent upon inclusion in the State Budget Act of 2002.

Since funding is based on full-year equivalent enrollment (FYEE), Grade 9 courses certified for the entire school year will receive a full apportionment; while Grade 9 courses certified for less than a complete school year will receive a proportion of a full apportionment. (For example: A participating school implements the class size reduction program on October 15, 2002. If 30 days of the 180-day school year have elapsed, the district would receive 150/180 or 83.33

percent of a full apportionment based on the participating school's full-year equivalent enrollment in the program.) It is assumed that the implementation of the Grade 9 class size reduction program will occur through the end of the school year.

The application packet will be used to determine the initial estimated allocation for each school district. An end-of-the-year document (J-9 MH-A) will be used to certify compliance and to verify the final apportionment for each school district.

Morgan-Hart Contact Information

Questions of a programmatic nature may be directed to Mary Ann Goodwin, Ed.D. by phone (916) 445-7757 or by e-mail (mgoodwin@cde.ca.gov). Questions regarding apportionment funding may be directed to Julie Woonacott at (916) 323-1314 or by e-mail (jwoonaco@cde.ca.gov) or Ross Valentine at (916) 327-4405 or by e-mail (rvalenti@cde.ca.gov). The website for Morgan-Hart Class Size Reduction is (www.cde.ca.gov/hart).

Upon passage of the Budget Act of 2002 and signing by the Governor, we will be notifying you of funding amounts. We are hopeful that class size reduction will continue, as so many students and teachers have indicated to us that it is of critical importance to student achievement.

Sincerely,

Joanne Mendoza, Deputy Superintendent
Curriculum and Instructional Leadership Branch

JM: mg
Enclosure: Application Packet